

School Board Trustee Candidate Questionnaire

From the Fredericksburg Tea Party

Candidate Name	Dennis McCanless
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** Please give concise and clear answers to each of the following questions and include your rationale for each answer. This questionnaire will be posted for public viewing.*

Academics:

What issues do you believe FISSD needs to address in its academic programs and what changes would you recommend?

I think we need to return the primary focus of the k-12 educational system to teaching a knowledge-based curriculum that allows students to build the fundamental skills needed to think independently, critically and have opportunities in life to succeed. I would be an advocate for removing the emphasis on continually evaluating and surveying the student’s emotional status as this takes instruction time away from the academic subjects that matter in developing a child for a productive life.

Budget:

What are your thoughts on the current and proposed budget for your school district?

The actual 2021-2022 and the proposed 2022-2023 operating budgets appear to be well thought out, but I would have questions regarding the details behind the budget categories such as 1) Instruction, 2) Curriculum Development & Staff Development, 3) Guidance & Counseling, Evaluation, 4) Instructional Leadership and School Leadership, 5) Social Work Services, and 6) Payments to Fiscal Agents for Shared Service Arrangements.

Bottomline, we need to spend the revenues that we have wisely to the maximum benefit of the educational service that we provide Gillespie County families and students.

As a board member, are there any areas you would consider cutting or adding? How do you determine your budget priorities?

My budget priorities are predicated on what drives the maximum benefit towards a quality education of the child. At the top of that list is being able to hire and retain the best teachers we can for this school district so that they can afford to live here. In order to do this, we may need to take a hard look at the allocation of existing revenues.

Transparency:

How will you ensure that parents are fully informed about programs, and 3rd party vendors that the district is considering purchasing, contract with, adopt and implement?

First, I would advocate for classroom curriculums to be posted online for all grades giving parents full transparency as to what their child is learning along with transparency around where the school is spending

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taxpayer dollars. Any 3rd party vendors that the district is considering should be presented to the community before a vote is held along with a full analysis of the basis for the vendor recommendations, and the research of the alternative solutions available and considered. The community needs to be able to understand that the school board trustees and school administrators are making the best decisions possible in the interest of the students and this community.

What process can be implemented to ensure the trustees are listening and addressing the concerns of their constituents whose children the district serves?

Accountability and transparency to the community in which the FISD school board trustees serve is very important in establishing and maintaining trust and a good working relationship. I would like to see the school board have a section on the FISD website that is focused on community issues and timely updates as to what action the school board is taking or has taken to resolve these issues. Open communication is key to quality relationships, and I think the school board can do better at keeping the community informed.

Supervision of the Superintendent:

The Board of Trustees employs and evaluates the Superintendent.

According to TEC 21.254 (c)(2) a district may develop its own appraisal process for the Superintendent, this must be done with the consultation of the district and campus level committees. Would you consider collaborating with parents of the district to create and approve a local level appraisal process for the Superintendent?

YES

Parental Rights/Authority:

Do you believe parents have the fundamental right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children? **YES** or **NO**. Please elaborate below.

YES, parents need to be respected, heard, and allowed to participate in the educational process of their children without rebuke or lack of transparency. Whether it is in the classrooms, the libraries, or in school related meetings, parents ultimately know what's best for their kids. They need to have the primary voice in their child's education and be fully informed as to what their child is learning and his or her educational progress. Also, parent involvement and input on issues that involve their child's education deserves the highest level of dignity and respect.

According to TEC 26.001 parents' rights are not to be limited and parents shall be encouraged to actively participate in creating and implementing educational programs for their children. As a board trustee, will you abide by this code and what does active participation look like to you?

YES, as a parent, being able to speak at school board meetings on subject items that are not on the meeting agenda along with having access to school board members to discuss issues that affect their children are important and should not be limited.

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Health Mandates:

What are your thoughts about district mandates regarding health such as masking, not allowing parents on campus, vaccinations, or climate emergency shutdowns?

Parents should decide what is best for their children.

CRT & DEI:

How do you define Critical Race Theory (CRT), and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?

CRT and DEI are left leaning Marxist ideologies that promote division and forced outcomes - not equal opportunities.

What are your thoughts about these theories influencing our students by way of books, lessons, posters, symposiums, or third-party vendors?

Parents of students in Fisd need to be respected as the primary voice in their child's upbringing and kids need to be protected from materials which promote ideologies and sexual indoctrination that go against family and society's values and moral ethos. This includes sexually explicit library books and other school materials placed in front of students. The education system exists to educate not to indoctrinate, and parents, not librarians or educators, have the sole right to determine what is acceptable for their children and their voices need to be heard.

Sexual Health:

Do you support 1. **NO sex education** 2. **Sexual Risk Avoidance** 3. **Sexual Risk Reduction**

2. **Sexual Risk Avoidance**

Do you believe that sex/gender is binary (male & female)? **YES**

Do you support or oppose the school teaching about gender identity and sexual orientation? **OPPOSE**

Do you support or oppose allowing opposite sex students from entering opposite sex bathrooms, locker rooms or participating in opposite sex sports? Please elaborate.

OPPOSE. The paramount job responsibility and moral obligation of school personnel is to protect all children from physical, mental, and emotional harm in the education system. Exposing biological males or females to the opposite sex in bathrooms and / or locker rooms goes against this obligation and responsibility and is unacceptable. Also, allowing those that identify as the opposite sex to participate with biological sex students can create an unfair advantage in sports and needs to be prohibited.

Sanctity of Life:

Do you believe that life begins at fertilization? **YES** or **NO**. **YES**

Do you believe that every pre-born child has a right to life? **YES**

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When should fetal development be taught in school and in what grades?

I believe that middle school aged children (7 grade and above) should be educated on the fetal development of a child and taught to value the life of the unborn.

Mental Health:

Social Emotional Learning, Mindfulness, Mental Health programs, Suicide Prevention, Restorative Learning, Group Counseling. Do you believe that the above programs should be broadcast to all students OR provided in special circumstances with informed parental written consent?

Mental health curriculum should only be provided by a licensed medical professional and with the parent's consent in the unique circumstances in which it is needed to help an individual child. The broad mental health approach in the schools with programs such as Teen Mental Health First Aid directed at all students is wrong and it has the ability to create more mental health issues for typical students than it solves.

Harmful Materials:

According to EF Legal in school board policy law, "A district may remove materials because they are pervasively vulgar or based solely upon the educational suitability of the books in question". Would you as a board trustee permanently remove any library books, curriculum and/or instructional resources that are "pervasively vulgar" and/or not educationally suitable for FUSD students?

YES. Children in the k-12 educational system are to be instructed in a knowledge based traditional academic curriculum that teaches them the fundamental skill sets needed to be successful in whatever opportunities in life they have after high school. It is not to expose them to or provide them with sexualization ideologies.

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.